

[Introduction]

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon the most honorable of His creation, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh, may the best prayers and peace be upon him, and upon his family, his companions, and those who follow them in excellence until the Day of Judgment. To proceed:

O fasting brothers and fasting sisters... Every year comes a noble month, the month of Ramaḍān, the month of forgiveness, the month of mercy. This month comes to awaken us from our heedlessness and makes each of us reflect on our deeds throughout the past year, contemplating them with a critical and reforming eye, so that he may correct and improve himself and reform his condition, to turn back to Allāh, the Exalted, and seize this opportunity for repentance and increasing in righteous deeds. For today is action without reckoning, and tomorrow is reckoning without action.

My brothers in Allah: On this blessed occasion, I wanted to present a message about fasting, which I titled: “Forty-Eight Questions on Fasting.” They were answered by the honorable Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī al-ʿUthaymīn, may Allāh have mercy on him. I then presented them to him, and he reviewed them and permitted me to print them. So may Allah reward him well and benefit the Muslims through his knowledge. I intended this work only for the benefit of my Muslim brothers, so that the Muslim may have knowledge of the rulings of his religion and worship Allāh in accordance with what He has legislated, for every deed a person does, Allāh will not accept it unless it is sincere for Him and in accordance with what the Messenger ﷺ legislated.

I ask Allāh, the Almighty, Lord of the Noble Throne, by His most beautiful names and exalted attributes, to make this work and others sincerely for His noble Face, and to benefit me through it in my life and after my death. I also ask Him to grant this effort acceptance among His servants. Indeed, He is All-Hearing, Responsive. And the last of our supplications is: All praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the worlds.

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What should we do in Ramadan?

The month of Ramaḡān is great and blessed. Allāh revealed the Qur'ān in it as guidance for mankind and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. He made fasting it one of the pillars of Islam, and its night prayers (Qiyām) a voluntary act that Increases good deeds and is a cause for salvation from the Fire. In the two ḡaḡīḡs, the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Whoever fasts Ramaḡān out of faith and seeking reward will have his past sins forgiven, and whoever stands [in prayer] during Laylat al-Qadr out of faith and seeking reward will have his past sins forgiven.” (1)

Whoever fasts Ramaḡān out of faith, meaning: belief in Allāh the Almighty, belief in His legislation and acceptance of it, and seeking reward, meaning: hoping for the reward Allāh has prepared for this fasting, as well as for the night prayers, then whoever performs the

night prayers of Ramaḡān or Laylat al-Qadr with these two qualities (faith and seeking reward), Allāh will forgive his past sins.

If we look to the past, we find that this blessed month witnessed great events that the believer rejoices in remembering and in their good outcomes.

The first occasion: Allāh Almighty revealed the Qur'ān in this month, meaning: its revelation began during this month, and He made it blessed. Through it, the Muslims opened lands east and west, gained honor through it, and the banner of Islām appeared everywhere.

It Is well known to all of us that the Rightly-Guided Caliph, 'Umar Ibn al-Khattāb (may Allāh be pleased with him), was brought the crown of Kisrā from al-Madā'in to al-Madīnah, carried on two camels, as mentioned in historical accounts, and it was placed before him (may Allāh be pleased with him) without a single gem missing from it. All of this was from the honor of the Muslims and the humiliation of the disbelievers—and to Allāh belongs all praise. And we are confident that the Islamic nation will return to the Noble Qur'ān, and

it will rule by it, and it will have honor again afterward, by the will of Allāh.

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhārī 1901 and Muslim 1731.

But the one who gathers honey must endure the sting of bees, and the one who picks roses must bear the thorns. Victory must be preceded by a trial for those who uphold Islām and call to it, because Allāh the Exalted said in His Book:

{And We will surely test you until We make evident those who strive among you and the patient ones}
[Muḥammad: 31],

And He said:

{Or did you think that you would enter Paradise while such trial had not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even] their messenger and those who believed with him said, “When is the help

of Allāh?” Unquestionably, the help of Allāh is near.} [Al-Baqarah: 214].

The second event In this blessed month: the Battle of Badr. It took place in the second year after the Hijrah. The reason for it was that the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him) heard that a caravan of Quraysh, led by Abū Sufyān, was coming from al-Shām to Makkah. When he learned of it, he called upon his companions—those who were swift to respond, to go out to intercept this caravan in order to seize it, because Quraysh had permitted themselves to expel the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions from their homes and wealth. There was no treaty or covenant between them and the Prophet (peace be upon him). So he (peace be upon him) went out to intercept their caravan to seize it.

He went out with only a small number, three hundred and a little over ten men, because they were not intending war, only to take the caravan. So they only went out with this small group, having with them seventy camels which they took turns riding, and only two horses.

As for Abū Sufyān, who was with the caravan, he sent word to the people of Makkah, urging them to come and protect their caravan and prevent it from being taken by the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings be upon him). So the people of Makkah set out in full force, with their weapons, pride, and arrogance, just as Allāh described them in His words:

{They went forth from their homes in arrogance and showing off to people, and hindering [others] from the way of Allāh. And Allāh is encompassing of what they do.} [Al-Anfāl: 47].

While on the way, news reached them that Abū Sufyān had managed to save his caravan from the Prophet (peace be upon him). So they consulted one another: should they return or not?

But Abu Jahl, who was their leader, said: “By Allāh, we will not return until we reach Badr, stay there for three days, slaughter camels, drink wine, have singing girls

perform for us, and let the Arabs hear of us, so they will always continue to fear us.”

These words reflect arrogance and pride, and confidence in falsehood to defeat the truth. They confronted the Prophet ﷺ with their full strength, weapons, arrogance, pride, and might. Their numbers ranged between nine hundred and one thousand, while the Prophet ﷺ and his companions were three hundred and a little over ten men. The two groups met, the soldiers of Allāh, the Exalted, and the soldiers of Shaytān. The outcome was in favor of the soldiers of Allāh.

Seventy men from Quraysh, from among their leaders, nobles, and prominent figures, were killed, and seventy others were captured. The Prophet ﷺ remained for three days in the battlefield area, as was his custom after victory and dominance. On the third day, he mounted his ride and stood over the well of Badr, into which twenty-four of the leaders of Quraysh had been thrown. He stood over the well and called them by their names and the names of their fathers, saying,

“O so-and-so son of so-and-so, have you found what your Lord promised true, for I have found what my Lord promised me to be true.”

They said, “O Messenger of Allāh, how can you speak to people who have become decayed corpses?”

He said,

“You do not hear better what I say than they do, but they cannot respond,” or he said, “They cannot return words.”

Then the Prophet ﷺ returned to Al-Madīnah, victorious, and all praise is due to Allāh.

The third occasion: the Conquest of Makkah. Makkah had been taken over by the polytheists and corrupted with disbelief, polytheism, and disobedience. Allāh, the Exalted, permitted His Prophet ﷺ to fight its people and made it lawful for him for an hour of the day. Then its sanctity was restored after the conquest, just as it had been before.

The Prophet ﷺ entered it on Friday, on the 20th of Ramaḡān, in the eighth year after the Hijrah, victorious and triumphant, until he stood at the door of the Ka’bah, while Quraysh stood below, waiting to see what he would do to them. He said to them,

“O Quraysh, what do you think I will do to you?”

They said, “Good, a noble brother, son of a noble brother.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Go, for you are free.” (2)

He granted them pardon after having power over them, and that is the height of character and forgiveness.

After mentioning the occasions in this month, we may ask: What should we do in the month of Ramaḡān?

What we do in this blessed month is either obligatory or recommended. The obligatory is fasting, and the recommended is night prayer.

Fasting, as we all know, is abstaining from that which breaks the fast, from the break of dawn until sunset, in devotion to Allāh. The evidence is His saying:

{So now, have relations with them and seek what Allāh has decreed for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of dawn. Then complete the fast until the night.} [Al-Baqarah: 187]

The purpose of fasting is not to train the body to endure thirst, hunger, and hardship, but rather to train the soul to give up what it loves for the sake of the One it loves.

The beloved thing given up is food, drink, and intercourse, which are desires of the soul.

- (2) Narrated by Ibn Ishaq as in Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah by Ibn Hisham 4/78, and by Ibn Sa'd in Al-Tabaqat 2/141, 142.

As for the beloved One whose pleasure is sought, it is Allāh, the Almighty, so we must be conscious of this intention—that we leave these things that break the fast seeking the pleasure of Allāh.

The wisdom behind making fasting obligatory for this nation has been clarified by Allāh, the Exalted, in His saying:

{O you who have believed, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you that you may become righteous} [Al-Baqarah: 183].

The word “that you may become righteous” here is for clarification of the reason, meaning: so that you fear Allāh, and thus abandon what He has forbidden and perform what He has made obligatory.

In the authentic narration, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever does not give up false speech and acting upon it and ignorance, Allāh has no need for him to give up his food and drink.” (3)

Meaning, Allāh does not want us merely to abstain from food and drink, rather He wants us to abandon false speech, acting upon it, and ignorance. For this reason, it is recommended for the fasting person, if someone insults him or fights him, to say: “I am fasting”, and not respond.

Because if he responds, the other will respond back, then he will reply again, and it will go back and forth, and the entire fast will turn into insults and fighting. But if he says “I am fasting”, the one who insulted or fought him will know that he is not unable to respond, but that fasting is what prevented him, and at that point, the aggressor will stop and feel ashamed, and not continue in insulting or fighting.

This is the wisdom behind the obligation of fasting. And if this is the case, then during fasting, we should be eager to do acts of obedience, such as remembrance of Allah, reciting the Qur’ān, prayer, charity, being good to others, smiling, opening our hearts, and having good

character—anything we can do to refine ourselves, we should act upon it.

(3) Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 1903, 6057.

If a Muslim remains in this state throughout the month, he will certainly be affected, and the month will not pass without a change in his condition. For this reason, it was legislated at the end of the month that a person gives Zakāt al-Fitr, to complete the purification of the soul. The soul is purified through performing acts of obedience and avoiding prohibitions, and also through giving wealth. That is why giving wealth is called Zakah (purification).

Q1: What are the things that break the fast?

A1: The things that break the fast mentioned in the Qur'an are three: eating, drinking, and intercourse. The evidence is Allah's statement:

{So now, have relations with them and seek what Allāh has decreed for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of dawn, then complete the fast until the night.} [Al-Baqarah: 187]

So with regard to eating and drinking, whether it is halal or haram, beneficial or harmful, or neither beneficial nor harmful, little or much, all of it breaks the fast. Based on this, smoking breaks the fast, even though it is harmful and haram.

The scholars even said: If a person swallowed a bead, his fast would be broken. Even though the bead has no benefit to the body, it is still considered among the things that break the fast. And if someone ate dough mixed with something impure, he would break his fast, even though it is harmful.

The third: Intercourse, and it is the most severe of the things that break the fast, because expiation is required for it. The expiation is to free a slave, and if one cannot, then to fast two consecutive months, and if unable, then to feed sixty poor people.

The fourth: Emitting semen due to desire. If a person ejaculates due to desire, his fast is invalidated, but no expiation is required, because expiation is only for intercourse.

The fifth: Nutritional injections that replace food and drink. These invalidate the fast. As for non-nutritional injections, they do not break the fast, whether taken through the vein or muscle, because they are not considered food, drink, or anything resembling them.

The sixth: Vomiting Intentionally. If a person vomits on purpose, his fast is broken. But if vomiting overcomes him, then there is no sin upon him.

The seventh: The discharge of menstrual or postpartum bleeding. If menstrual or postpartum blood comes from a woman, even a moment before sunset, her fast is invalidated.

But if the blood comes a moment after sunset, her fast is valid.

The eighth: Bloodletting (cupping). This is based on the saying of the Messenger ﷺ:

“The one who cups and the one who is cupped have broken their fast.” (1)

So if a man undergoes cupping and blood appears, his fast is broken, and the fast of the one who performs the cupping is also broken, if done in the known way during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, which is that the cupper sucks the blood into a tube.

But if cupping is done using devices that are separated from the cupper, then the one cupped breaks the fast, but the cupper does not.

If any of these things that break the fast occur during the daytime in Ramadan from a person who is obligated to fast, then four things follow:

1. Sin, 2. Invalidation of the fast, 3. Obligation to abstain for the rest of the day, 4. Obligation to make up the day

And if the fast was broken by intercourse, then a fifth thing is added:

5. Expiation

However, we must know that these things only invalidate the fast under three conditions:

1. Knowledge, 2. Remembrance, 3. Intent

So if a fasting person does one of these nullifiers out of ignorance, his fast remains valid, whether he is ignorant of the time or of the ruling.

Example of ignorance of time: a man gets up at the end of the night thinking that dawn has not yet come, so he

eats and drinks, and then it turns out that dawn had already come. His fast is valid because he was unaware of the time.

Example of ignorance of ruling: a person performs cupping while fasting, not knowing that cupping breaks the fast. In this case, it is said to him: your fast is valid.

The evidence for this is Allah's saying:

{Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we forget or make a mistake} [Al-Baqarah: 286] — and this is from the Qur'an.

(1) Narrated by Abu Dawood, 2367.

And from the Sunnah: is the hadith of Asma' bint Abi Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them, which was narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (1). She said:

“We broke our fast on a cloudy day during the time of the Prophet ﷺ, then the sun appeared.”

So their breaking of the fast happened during the day, but they did not know, rather they thought the sun had set.

The Prophet ﷺ did not command them to make it up, and had it been obligatory, he would have commanded them, and had he commanded, it would have been transmitted to us.

However, if a person breaks the fast thinking the sun has set, and it later becomes clear that it had not, he must refrain from eating for the rest of the day, and his fast remains valid.

The second condition: that the person is mindful (not forgetful). The opposite of mindfulness is forgetfulness. So if a fasting person forgets and eats or drinks, his fast is valid, due to Allah’s saying:

{Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we forget or make a mistake} [Al-Baqarah: 286],

And the saying of the Prophet ﷺ as narrated by Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him:

“Whoever forgets while he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast, for it is Allah who fed him and gave him drink.” (2)

The third condition: intention and will.

So if the fasting person does one of the things that break the fast without intention or choice, his fast is valid.

Even if he rinsed his mouth and water went down into his stomach without intending it, his fast is valid.

And if a man forces his wife to have intercourse, and she is unable to resist him, her fast is valid, because she did not intend it.

The evidence is the verse regarding someone who disbelieves under coercion:

{Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief, except one who is forced while his heart is secure in faith...} [An-Nahl: 106]

So if a fasting person is forced to break the fast, or commits a nullifier without intention, then nothing is upon him and his fast is valid.

Q2: Is there a fixed number of nights for praying in Ramadan or not?

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 1959.

(2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 6669.

A2: There is no specific required number of rak'ahs for praying during Ramadan. If a person prays all night,

there is no problem. If they pray twenty rak'ahs or fifty rak'ahs, there is no problem. However, the best number is what the Prophet, peace be upon him, used to do, which is eleven or thirteen rak'ahs. The Mother of the Believers, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, was asked, "How did the Prophet pray in Ramadan?" She said, "He did not exceed eleven rak'ahs in Ramadan or outside of it." But these rak'ahs must be performed in the prescribed manner. It is recommended to lengthen the recitation, bowing, prostration, standing after bowing, and sitting between the two prostrations, unlike what some people do today, praying quickly in a way that prevents the followers from doing what they should. Leading the prayer is a position of responsibility, and the one in charge must do what is most beneficial and correct. For the imam to only care about finishing early is a mistake.

Rather, he should do what the Prophet, peace be upon him, used to do in terms of lengthening the standing, bowing, prostration, and sitting according to what has been reported, and we should increase in supplication, recitation, glorification, and so on.

Q3: If a person prays behind an imam who prays more than eleven rak'ahs, should they follow the imam or leave after completing eleven?

A3: The Sunnah is to follow the imam, because if a person leaves before the imam finishes, they will not get the reward for praying the night. The Messenger, peace be upon him, said, "Whoever prays with the imam until he finishes, it will be recorded for him as if he spent the night in prayer." This is to encourage us to stay with the imam until he finishes.

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1147, 3569 and Muslim 1670.

(2) Narrated by Abu Dawood 1375 and al-Tirmidhi 806, authenticated by al-Albani.

The companions, may Allah be pleased with them, followed their imam in something additional to what was legislated in one prayer, and that was with the Commander of the Believers, Uthman ibn Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, when he completed the prayer

in Mina during Hajj, meaning he prayed four rak'ahs, even though the Prophet, peace be upon him, Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman in the beginning of his caliphate—for eight years—used to pray two rak'ahs. Then he prayed four, and the companions objected to that, yet still followed him and prayed four with him. So if this was the guidance of the companions—their keenness to follow the imam—then why do some people, when they see the imam praying more than the number the Prophet, peace be upon him, used to pray, which was eleven rak'ahs, leave in the middle of the prayer, as we see some people in the Haram leaving before the imam under the pretext that the legislated number is eleven rak'ahs?

Q4: Some people eat while the second adhan for Fajr in Ramadan is being called. What is the ruling on their fast?

A4: If the muezzin gives the adhan based on certainty of the Fajr entering, then it is obligatory to stop eating and drinking as soon as one hears the adhan.

But if he gives the adhan based on assumption and not certainty, as is the case in these times, then it is permissible to eat and drink until the muezzin finishes the adhan.

Q5: Many people in Ramadan make their only concern food and sleep, so Ramadan becomes a month of laziness and inactivity. Some of them play at night and sleep during the day. What is your advice to them?

A5: I believe that this, in reality, involves wasting time and money. If people have no concern except for varying types of food, sleeping during the day, and staying up at night for things that don't benefit them, then there is no doubt this is a waste of a valuable opportunity that may never return in a person's life. A wise person is one who follows the proper course in Ramadan—sleeping early at night, praying Tarawih, and, if possible, standing in prayer at the end of the night. Likewise, he should not be excessive in food and drink. Those who are able should be keen on providing iftar for fasting people, whether in mosques or other places, because whoever provides iftar for a fasting person will have a reward equal to theirs. So if someone feeds his fasting brothers, he earns the

same rewards as them. Therefore, whoever Allah has blessed with wealth should seize this opportunity to gain great reward.

Q6: Some imams in Ramadan prolong the supplication, while others shorten it. What is correct?

A6: What is correct is that there should be neither excess nor neglect. Prolonging the supplication in a way that burdens people is prohibited. When the Prophet, peace be upon him, was informed that Mu'adh ibn Jabal prolonged the prayer with his people, he became more angry than he ever did. In any sermon and said to Mu'adh, "Are you putting people to trial, O Mu'adh?" So what is proper is to stick to the reported supplications or add a little without causing hardship. There is no doubt that excessive length is hard on people and wears them out, especially the weak among them. Some people have responsibilities and do not want to leave before the imam, yet it burdens them to stay. My advice to fellow imams is to keep a balanced approach. Also, the supplication should occasionally be left out so that the general public does not think that Qunoot in Witr is obligatory.

Q7: What is the authenticity of the hadith, “The one who cupps and the one who is cupped has broken the fast”?

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 704 and Muslim 972.

(2) Its sourcing has been mentioned previously.

A7: This hadith was authenticated by Imam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, as well as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, and other verifying scholars. It is authentic, and it also makes sense theoretically, because the one who is cupped has a large amount of blood removed, which weakens the body. When the body is weakened, it needs nourishment. So if a fasting person needs cupping and undergoes it, we say, “You have broken your fast, so eat and drink to regain your strength.” But if he is not in need, we say, “Do not do cupping if the fast is obligatory,” and in that way, we preserve his strength until he breaks the fast.

Q8: What is the ruling on people from Jeddah going to Makkah to pray Tarawih?

A8: There is no harm in a person going to the Haram Mosque to pray Tarawih, because the Haram is one of the places to which travel is encouraged.

However, if a person is an employee or an imam in a mosque, he should not leave his job or abandon leading the prayer in his own mosque just to pray in the Haram, because praying in the Haram is Sunnah. As for fulfilling one's job duties, that is an obligation, and an obligation cannot be left for the sake of a Sunnah. I have been informed that some imams leave their mosques and go to Makkah to make i'tikaf or to pray Tarawih in the Haram, and this is a mistake, because fulfilling an obligation is mandatory, while going to Makkah for Tarawih or i'tikaf is not.

Q9: What is the ruling on following imams whose voices are beautiful?

A9: I see no harm in that, but it is better for a person to pray in their local mosque so that people gather around their imam and maintain attendance in their own

mosques, and so that the mosques do not become empty. Also, it prevents overcrowding at the mosque where the imam's recitation is beautiful, which can cause confusion and potentially lead to undesirable situations. Someone might, for example, take advantage of a woman leaving a crowded mosque, and due to the crowd, she might not notice anything until a distance away.

For these reasons, we believe a person should remain in their mosque, as it contributes to maintaining the mosque, establishing the congregation, uniting the worshipers under their imam, and avoiding crowding and hardship.

Q10: Does drawing a large amount of blood break the fast?

A10: Drawing a large amount of blood, if it leads to the same outcome as cupping—weakening the body and requiring nourishment—then it takes the same ruling as cupping. However, if blood exits without the person's choice, such as a man being injured and bleeding heavily, it does not affect the fast, because it was not intentional.

Q11: Is Tarawih prayed on the night of Eid?

A11: If the new moon is sighted on the 30th night of Ramadan, then Tarawih and night prayer are not performed, because Tarawih and qiyam are acts of worship specific to Ramadan. Once it is confirmed that the month has ended, these prayers are no longer held, and people return from the mosques to their homes.

Q12: Is it permissible for someone in i'tikaf in the Haram to leave to eat or drink, and can they go up to the mosque roof to attend lessons?

A12: Yes, it is permissible for someone in i'tikaf in the Haram or any other mosque to go out to eat and drink if he is unable to bring food and drink into the mosque, because this is a necessity. Just as he will leave to relieve himself or to perform ghusl if he becomes in a state of major impurity. As for going up to the mosque roof, that also does not invalidate the i'tikaf, because going from the lower part of the mosque to the roof involves only a

few steps and is done with the intention of returning to the mosque, so there is no harm in it.

Q13: A young man masturbated during Ramadan, unaware that it breaks the fast, and he was overtaken by desire. What is the ruling?

A13: The ruling is that nothing is required of him, because we previously explained that a person's fast is only broken if three conditions are met: knowledge, remembrance, and intention. However, I must say that a person must be patient and avoid masturbation because it is prohibited. Allah says:

{And those who guard their private parts, except from their wives or those their right hands possess — for indeed, they are not to be blamed. But whoever seeks beyond that, then those are the transgressors} [Al-Mu'minun: 5–7].

And the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

“O young men, whoever among you is able to marry, let him do so, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and safeguarding chastity. And whoever is not able, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him.” (1)

If masturbation were permissible, the Prophet, peace be upon him, would have pointed it out, because it is easier for people and brings pleasure. Fasting, on the other hand, involves difficulty. So when the Prophet directed those unable to marry to fast instead, this indicates that masturbation is not allowed.

Q14: What is the ruling on fasting while abandoning prayer during Ramadan?

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1905 and Muslim 3379.

A14: The one who fasts but does not pray, his fasting is of no benefit, it is not accepted, and his responsibility is not cleared by it. In fact, he is not even obligated to fast as long as he does not pray, because one who does not pray is like a Jew or a Christian. So, what do you think about a Jew or a Christian who fasts while remaining on

his religion—would his fast be accepted? No. Therefore, we say to this person: Repent to Allah by starting to pray, then fast. And whoever repents, Allah will accept his repentance.

Q15: Some people say that the months are not all known to begin or end by moon sighting, and therefore it is necessary to complete Sha’ban as thirty days, and likewise Ramadan. What is the ruling on this statement?

A15: This statement—that the beginnings and ends of all months cannot be known by sighting—is incorrect. In fact, the crescent of all months can be sighted. This is why the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

“When you see it, fast, and when you see it, break your fast.” (1)

The Prophet would not link something to an impossible action. So, if it is possible to see the crescent of Ramadan, then it is also possible to see the crescent of the other months.

As for the second part of the question—that it is necessary to complete Sha’ban as thirty days and likewise Ramadan—then yes, it is true that if the moon is obscured and we do not see it, due to clouds or haze or the like, we complete Sha’ban as thirty days, then fast, and we complete Ramadan as thirty days, then break the fast. This is what has been reported from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, who said:

“Fast when you see it and break your fast when you see it. If it is hidden from you, then complete thirty days.”

And in another narration: “Complete the count as thirty days.” (2)

So, if on the 30th night of Sha’ban the people go out to sight the moon and do not see it, they complete Sha’ban as thirty days.

And if on the 30th night of Ramadan they go out to sight the moon and do not see it, they complete Ramadan as thirty days.

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1900 and Muslim 2471.

(2) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1909 and Muslim 2481 and following.

Q16: What is the Islamic method for confirming the start of a month? Is it permissible to rely on astronomical calculations to determine the beginning or end of a month? And is it allowed for a Muslim to use what is called a “durbeen” (telescope) to sight the moon?

A16: The Islamic method for confirming the beginning of a month is that people go out to sight the crescent moon. It should be done by someone who is trustworthy in his religion and has strong eyesight.

If the crescent is sighted, then it becomes obligatory to act upon that sighting—by fasting if it’s the crescent of Ramadan,

or breaking the fast if it's the crescent of Shawwal. It is not permissible to rely on astronomical calculations if there is no actual sighting. However, if the crescent is seen, even through astronomical observatories, then the sighting is valid, due to the general statement of the Prophet, peace be upon him:

“When you see it, fast, and when you see it, break your fast.” (1)

As for using the “durbeen” (telescope) to sight the moon, there is no harm in it. But it is not obligatory, because the apparent meaning of the Sunnah is to rely on normal sighting. Still, if it is used and someone trustworthy sees the moon through it, that sighting is valid. People in the past used similar tools when they would climb minarets on the 30th night of Sha’ban or Ramadan to sight the moon through such instruments.

In any case, whenever the crescent is confirmed by any means, it is obligatory to act accordingly, due to the general statement of the Prophet, peace be upon him:

“When you see it, fast, and when you see it, break your fast.” (2)

Q17: Is it obligatory for all Muslims in all countries to fast based on a single moon sighting? And how should Muslims in non-Muslim countries, where no official sighting is done, observe the fast?

(1) Previously sourced.

(2) Previously sourced.

A17: This issue is one on which scholars have differed—namely, if the crescent is sighted in one Muslim country and confirmed according to Islamic criteria, are the rest of the Muslims required to act upon that sighting?

Some scholars say yes, all Muslims are required to follow that sighting. They base this on the general meaning of Allah’s statement:

{So whoever among you witnesses the month, let him fast it} [Al-Baqarah: 185],

And the Prophet's saying:

“When you see it, fast.” (1)

They argue that this command is directed at all Muslims. Clearly, it does not mean that every individual must personally see the crescent, which is often impossible. Rather, the meaning is that once someone whose sighting is accepted in Islamic law sees it, the ruling applies universally. Thus, the sighting applies to all places.

Other scholars, however, hold the view that if moonrise times (matāliq) differ between regions, then each region should rely on its own sighting. If the regions share the same moonrise time, then those who did not sight it should follow the region where the moon was seen. They also base their view on the same verses and hadiths but interpret them differently. They argue that Allah's command:

{So whoever among you witnesses the month, let him fast it}

Is not referring to each individual's personal sighting but to the legal sighting within one's region or matching regions. So, it applies to the place where the moon is sighted and to any other place that shares the same moonrise horizon.

As for those in places with different moonrise horizons, they are considered not to have seen the crescent—neither in reality nor by legal ruling. They also draw an analogy between the monthly timing of Ramadan and the daily timing of prayer, which varies by location.

(1) Previously sourced.

(2) Previously sourced.

A17 (continued): Just as countries differ in the timing of daily fasting and breaking the fast, they should likewise

differ in the beginning and end of the fasting month. It's well-known that daily timing differences are acknowledged by all Muslims—for example, those in the east begin fasting earlier and break their fast earlier than those in the west.

So, if we accept that local timing differences apply to daily fasting, then it logically follows that they apply to monthly fasting (i.e., the start and end of Ramadan) as well.

No one can claim that Allah's statement:

{...Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the night...} [Al-Baqarah: 187],

And the Prophet's saying:

“When the night approaches from this direction, and the day departs from that direction, and the sun has set, the fasting person should break his fast,” (1)

Are meant to apply universally across all Muslim lands at the same moment.

The same applies to Allah's command:

{So whoever among you witnesses the month, let him fast it},

And the Prophet's words:

“When you see it, fast, and when you see it, break your fast.” (2)

This view carries strong reasoning based on the literal wording, sound reasoning, and correct analogy, namely, comparing monthly timing to daily timing.

Another opinion among scholars is that this matter is left to the discretion of the ruler (wali al-amr). If he decides to begin or end the fast based on valid Islamic evidence,

then the people under his authority must follow that, to avoid division and chaos under a single governance. These scholars cite the hadith:

“Fasting is the day the people fast, and breaking the fast is the day the people break it.” (3)

Other opinions also exist among scholars who have recorded the various views on this matter.

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1954 and Muslim 2526.

(2) Previously sourced.

(3) Narrated by al-Tirmidhi 697 and authenticated by al-Albani.

As for the second part of the question, which is: how do Muslims fast in non-Muslim countries where there is no official sighting? These people can confirm the new moon through a legitimate method, which is to try to sight the

moon themselves if possible. If they cannot do this, then if we adopt the first opinion on this matter, once the moon is sighted in an Islamic country, they should follow that sighting, whether they themselves saw it or not.

And if we adopt the second opinion, which is that each

country is to follow its own sighting if it differs in moonrise times, and they are unable to sight it in the country they are

in, then they should follow the closest Islamic country to them, because this is the most they can act upon.

Q18: If a person is certain that the month has begun by sighting the new moon but is unable to inform the court, is fasting obligatory upon him?

A18: Scholars have differed on this, some say it is obligatory, others say it is not, based on whether the new moon is what is officially declared and widely known among people, or whether it is what is seen after sunset, regardless of its popularity.

What appears to me is that whoever sees it and is certain of it, and is in a remote area where no one else saw it or tried to, then he must fast, due to the general meaning of Allah's saying: {So whoever of you sights the month, let him fast it} [Al-Baqarah: 185], and the Prophet's saying: "When you see it, fast." But if he is in a town and testifies to the court and his testimony is rejected, then in this case, he should fast in secret so as not to openly differ from the people.

Q19: Has a specific supplication from the Prophet, peace be upon him, been reported for when one sees the new moon? And is it permissible for someone who hears the news of the new moon to say it even if they did not see it?

A19: Yes, he says: "Allahu Akbar, O Allah, bring it over us with safety and faith, and security and Islam, and guidance to what You love and are pleased with. My Lord and your Lord is Allah, a crescent of goodness and guidance."

Two hadiths have been reported from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, regarding this, though there is a slight weakness in them. The apparent meaning of the hadith is that this supplication is only to be said upon sighting the new moon. As for one who hears about it but does not see it, it is not prescribed for him to say it.

Q20: If people learn of the beginning of the month only after part of the day has passed, are they required to abstain for the rest of the day, or to make it up?

A20: If people learn that Ramadan has started during the day, they must abstain, because it has been confirmed that

the day is part of Ramadan, so abstention is required. But are they also required to make it up, meaning to make up that day? There is a difference of opinion among scholars. The majority say that they must make it up because they did not intend to fast from the beginning of the day, and part of the day passed without the intention. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “Actions are only

by intentions, and each person will have only what he intended.”

Some scholars say that they are not required to make it up because their breaking of the fast was due to ignorance, and the ignorant is excused. However, making it up is safer and more reassuring for the conscience. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt.” It is only one day, easy to make up, with no hardship, and it brings peace of mind and comfort to the heart.

Q21: Do all Muslims bear sin if none of them attempts to sight the crescent of Ramadan, whether for its beginning or end?

A21: Sighting the crescent — of Ramadan or Shawwal — was a known practice during the time of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “The people tried to sight the crescent, and I informed the Prophet,

peace be upon him, that I had seen it, so he fasted and commanded the people to fast.”

There is no doubt that the guidance of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, is the most complete and perfect guidance.

Q22: If a man embraces Islam after several days of Ramadan have passed, is he required to make up the previous days?

A22: He is not required to make up the previous days, because he was a disbeliever during that time. A disbeliever is not required to make up the righteous deeds he missed, as Allah says: {Say to those who disbelieve, if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven} [Al-Anfal: 38]. Also, people used to embrace Islam during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and he did not command them to make up missed fasts, prayers, or zakah.

But if he embraces Islam during the day, is he required to abstain and make it up? Or just abstain without

making it up? Or is he not required to abstain or make it up?

There is a difference of opinion among scholars on this matter, and the more correct opinion is that he is required to abstain but not to make it up. He must abstain because he has become one of those upon whom fasting is obligatory, but he is not required to make it up, because prior to that he was not of those obligated. It is like a child who reaches puberty during the day — according to the stronger opinion, he must abstain but not make it up.

Q23: Are children under the age of fifteen commanded to fast, as they are commanded to pray?

A23: Yes, children who have not reached puberty are to be instructed to fast if they are able to, just as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, used to have their children do so.

Scholars have stated that a guardian should command the children under his care to fast, so they can train for it,

become accustomed to it, and so the foundations of Islam take root in their souls until it becomes second nature to them.

However, if it is difficult for them or harmful, then they are not required to fast. I would like to point out an issue here practiced by some fathers or mothers — preventing their children from fasting, contrary to what the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, used to do. They claim that they are doing this out of mercy and compassion for the children, but in reality, mercy towards children is in instructing them in the laws of Islam, getting them used to them, and familiarizing them with them. This is without a doubt good upbringing and complete care.

It is confirmed that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock.” What guardians must do toward those

whom Allah has placed under their care, from family and children, is to fear Allah regarding them and to instruct them in what they are commanded to instruct them from the laws of Islam.

Q24: If someone recovers from an illness that doctors had previously declared incurable, and this happened after some days of Ramadan had passed, is he required to make up the previous days?

A24: If someone breaks their fast during Ramadan due to an illness that is not expected to be cured — either by custom or by the report of trustworthy doctors — then it is obligatory for him to feed a poor person for each missed day. If he does so and Allah later grants him recovery, he is not required to fast those days that he fed for, because his responsibility was fulfilled through the feeding in place of fasting.

And once the obligation has been fulfilled, no further duty remains. A similar case is what the jurists have mentioned about a man who is unable to perform Hajj due to a chronic condition and appoints someone to

perform Hajj on his behalf, then later recovers — he is not required to perform Hajj again.

Q25: Some imams in Tarawih prayer imitate the recitation of others in order to beautify their voices with the Qur'an — is this a permissible and valid practice?

A25: Beautifying the voice with the Qur'an is a legislated act, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, commanded it. He once listened to the recitation of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari and was pleased with it, saying to him: "You have been given a flute from the flutes of the family of David." Based on this, if the imam of a mosque imitates someone with a beautiful voice and recitation in order to improve his own voice and recitation of the Book of Allah — the Almighty — then this is something legislated both in itself and for other purposes, because it encourages those praying behind him and helps bring their hearts to attention and makes them more receptive and focused during the recitation. And the bounty of Allah is given to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.

Q26: Some mosque imams try to soften people's hearts and move them emotionally by changing the tone of their voice at times during Tarawih prayer and the Qunoot supplication. I have heard some people object to this — what is your opinion, may Allah preserve you?

A26: What I believe is that if this is done within the limits of the Shari'ah and without excess, then there is no harm in it.

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari said to the Prophet, peace be upon him: "If I had known you were listening to my recitation, I would have beautified it more," meaning he would have improved and embellished it. So if someone improves their voice or recites in a manner that softens hearts, I see no problem with that. But going to extremes, such as doing this with nearly every word of the Qur'an as mentioned in the question, I see that as excessive and it should not be done. And Allah knows best.

Q27: What is the ruling on people who sleep all day during Ramadan, some of whom pray in congregation, while others do not? Is the fasting of such people valid?

A27: The fasting of these people is valid and their obligation is fulfilled, but it is very deficient and contrary to the purpose of the Lawgiver in fasting, because Allah, the Exalted, said: “O you who have believed, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you that you may become righteous” [Al-Baqarah: 183].

And the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

“Whoever does not give up false speech, acting upon it, and ignorance, Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink.”

It Is known that neglecting prayer and being careless about it is not part of the piety of Allah, the Exalted, nor of abandoning falsehood, and it is contrary to what Allah and His Messenger intended with the obligation of fasting. It is astonishing that these people sleep all day and stay up all night, and perhaps they spend the night in idle talk that brings them no benefit, or in something forbidden through which they earn sin. My advice to these and those like them is to fear Allah, the Exalted,

and seek His help in performing the fast in the manner that pleases Him, and to make use of it with remembrance, reading the Qur'an, prayer, doing good to others, and other things required by Islamic law. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was the most generous of people, and he was most generous in Ramadan when Jibril would meet him and study the Qur'an with him. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, was more generous in doing good than the blowing wind.

Q28: We notice that some Muslims are negligent in performing prayer during the rest of the year, but when Ramadan comes, they rush to pray, fast, and read the Qur'an. So how is the fasting of these people? And what is your advice to them?

(1) Previously cited.

(2) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1902, Book of Fasting, and Muslim 2308, Book of Virtues.

A28: The fasting of these people is valid, because it is performed by those qualified to fast and is not accompanied by anything that invalidates it, so it is valid. But my advice to these individuals is to fear Allah Almighty regarding themselves, and to worship Allah, Glorified and Exalted, with what He has obligated upon them at all times and in all places. A person does not know when death will come to him—it may be that they await Ramadan and do not reach it. Allah, Glorified be He, did not set a limit for worship except death, as He said: “And worship your Lord until certainty comes to you” [Al-Hijr: 99], meaning until death, which is the certainty.

Q29: Is the intention to fast Ramadan once sufficient, or must one intend to fast each day separately?

A29: It is known that anyone who gets up at the end of the night and eats suhoor has undoubtedly intended to fast, because every rational person who does something by choice only does it with intention—and that intention is the niyyah. A person does not eat late at night except because he intends to fast. If his purpose were just to eat, it would not be his habit to eat at that time. So this is the

intention. However, such a question arises in the case of someone who, for example, sleeps before sunset in Ramadan and remains asleep, and no one wakes him up until after dawn of the next day—he did not intend to fast that night for the next day’s fast. So do we say that his fast is valid based on the previous intention? Or do we say it is invalid because he did not make intention during the night?

We say: his fast is valid. The correct view is that intending to fast Ramadan at the beginning of the month is sufficient, and it is not necessary to renew the intention each day—unless something occurs that permits breaking the fast and he actually breaks it during the month. In that case, he must make a new intention to resume fasting.

Q30: What is the ruling on eating and drinking while the adhan is being called, or shortly after the adhan—especially if one does not know the exact time of fafastin

A30: The cutoff point that prevents the fasting person from eating and drinking is the appearance of dawn, due to Allah’s saying: “So now, have relations with them and seek what Allah has decreed for you, and eat and drink

until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of dawn...” [Al-Baqarah: 187].

And due to the Prophet ﷺ saying: “Eat and drink until Ibn Umm Maktum gives the adhan, for he does not call the adhan until dawn appears.” (1)

So what matters is the actual appearance of dawn. If the muezzin is trustworthy and says he does not give the adhan until dawn has appeared, then as soon as he gives the adhan, it becomes obligatory to stop eating and drinking upon hearing it. However, if the muezzin gives the adhan based on estimation, then it is safer for a person to stop eating when hearing his adhan—unless the person is in an open area and can see the dawn himself, in which case he

is not required to stop even if he hears the adhan, until he actually sees the dawn appear, provided there is no obstruction to seeing it. This is because Allah made the ruling dependent on the clarity of the white thread from the black thread at dawn, and the Prophet ﷺ said regarding the adhan of Ibn Umm Maktum: “He does not give the adhan until dawn appears...”

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 1918.

And I hereby point out an issue practiced by some muezzins, which is that they give the adhan five or four minutes before dawn, claiming that this is a precaution for fasting. This is a precaution we describe as “excessiveness” and not a legitimate precaution. The Prophet ﷺ said: “The extremists are ruined.” (1) This is an incorrect precaution—because if they are being cautious for the sake of fasting, they are doing harm to the prayer. Many people, when they hear the adhan, get up and pray Fajr, and in this case, the person who gets up based on hearing the adhan that was called before the true time of Fajr ends up praying before the time has entered. And prayer before its time is invalid. This harms those who pray.

Then, it also harms those who are fasting, because it prevents someone who wants to fast from eating and drinking—while Allah has permitted that. So the muezzin ends up wronging both the fasting people by forbidding what Allah has made lawful, and the praying people by causing them to pray before the time has entered, which invalidates their prayer.

So the muezzin must fear Allah, the Exalted, and follow what is correct based on the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Q31: In some countries, the day becomes unusually long—sometimes reaching 20 hours. Are the Muslims in those countries required to fast the entire length of the day?

A31: Yes, they are required to fast the entire day, because Allah said: “So now, have relations with them and seek what Allah has decreed for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of dawn, then complete the fast until the night.” [Al-Baqarah: 187] And because the Prophet ﷺ said: “When the night comes from here, and the day departs from here, and the sun has set, the fasting person has broken his fast.” (2)

(1) Narrated by Muslim 6878.

(2) Previously cited.

Q32: A company owner has non-Muslim workers. Is it permissible for him to prevent them from eating and drinking in front of the Muslim workers in the same company during the day in Ramadan?

A32: First, we say that a person should not hire non-Muslim workers if he can hire Muslims instead, because Muslims are better than non-Muslims. Allah said: “And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he may please you.” [Al-Baqarah: 221] However, if there is a need to hire non-Muslim workers, then it is permissible to do so—only to the extent of that need.

As for them eating and drinking during the day in Ramadan in front of fasting Muslims, there is no harm in this. The fasting Muslim should praise Allah, the Exalted, for guiding him to Islam—which is the cause of happiness in this world and the next—and praise Allah for protecting him from what those who have not been guided are afflicted with.

Even though eating and drinking are prohibited for him during the days of Ramadan, he will receive the reward on the Day of Judgment when it is said to him: “Eat and

drink in satisfaction for what you put forth in days past.”
[Al-Haqqah: 24]

However, non-Muslims should be prevented from openly eating and drinking in public areas, as this contradicts the Islamic atmosphere of the country.

Q33: Do backbiting and gossip break the fast during the day in Ramadan?

A33: Backbiting and gossip do not break the fast, but they diminish its reward. Allah said: “O you who have believed, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you that you may become righteous.” [Al-Baqarah: 183] And the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever does not give up false speech, acting upon it, and ignorance, then Allah has no need for him to give up his food and drink.” (1)

Q34: If a fasting person is seen eating or drinking during the day in Ramadan out of forgetfulness, should he be reminded or not?

(1) Previously cited.

A34: Whoever sees a fasting person eating or drinking during the day in Ramadan must remind him, based on the Prophet ﷺ's statement when he forgot in prayer: "If I forget, remind me." (1)

A person who forgets is excused due to his forgetfulness. However, the person who remembers and knows that this act invalidates fasting, yet does not inform the other, is negligent—because that is his brother, and he should love for his brother what he loves for himself.

In summary: if someone sees a fasting person eating or drinking out of forgetfulness during the day in Ramadan, he must remind him. And the fasting person must immediately stop eating. It is not permissible for him to continue.

Rather, if he has food or water in his mouth, he must spit it out—it is not allowed to swallow it after being reminded or after remembering he is fasting.

On this occasion, I would also like to clarify that the things which break the fast do not invalidate the fast in three cases:

If done forgetfully, If done ignorantly, If done unintentionally

So if someone forgets and eats or drinks, his fast is still valid, because the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever forgets while he is fasting and eats or drinks, let him complete his fast, for it is Allah who fed him and gave him drink.”
(2)

And if someone eats or drinks thinking that dawn has not yet come, or that the sun has already set—then later finds out that his assumption was wrong—his fast is still valid. This is based on the hadith of Asma’ bint Abi Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them both), who said: “We broke our fast during the time of the Prophet ﷺ on a cloudy day, then the sun appeared, and the Prophet ﷺ did not command them to make up the day.”

(3) If making it up had been obligatory, the Prophet ﷺ would have commanded it—and if he had, it would have

been transmitted to us, because Allah's legislation must be preserved and conveyed until the Day of Judgment.

Likewise, if someone does not intend to do something that breaks the fast, he is not considered to have broken it. For example, if he rinses his mouth and some water unintentionally reaches his stomach, his fast is not invalidated, because he did not intend it.

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 401, Book of Prayer, and Muslim 572, Book of Mosques

(2) Previously cited

(3) Previously cited

And just as if a person has a wet dream while fasting and ejaculates, his fast is not invalidated—because he was asleep and did not intend it. Allah the Almighty said: “There is no blame upon you for what you do unintentionally, but only for what your hearts intended.” [Al-Ahzab: 5]

Q35: Is completing (khatm) the Qur'an during Ramadan an obligation for the fasting person?

A35: Completing the Qur'an in Ramadan is not an obligation for the fasting person, but it is recommended for a person to increase in reading the Qur'an during Ramadan, as this was the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He ﷺ would review the Qur'an with Jibril every Ramadan.

Q36: What is the ruling on Tarawih prayer, and what is the Sunnah regarding the number of its rak'ahs?

A36: Tarawih prayer is a Sunnah that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established for his ummah. He prayed it with his companions for three nights, but then stopped doing so out of fear that it would become obligatory upon them. The Muslims continued praying individually after that during the time of Abu Bakr and the beginning of Umar's caliphate. Then the Commander of the Faithful, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), gathered them behind Tamim al-Dari and Ubayy ibn Ka'b, and they began praying in congregation as they do to this day, praise be to Allah. It is a Sunnah in Ramadan.

As for the number of its rak'ahs, it is eleven or thirteen rak'ahs, this is the Sunnah in that. But if one increases beyond this, there is no harm and no problem in that, because various forms of increase and decrease were reported from the Salaf, and they did not denounce one another. So whoever increases is not to be denounced, and whoever limits himself to the reported number, that is better. The Sunnah indicates that there is no problem in increasing, as it was reported in al-Bukhari and others from the hadith of Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, that a man asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, about the night prayer, and he said, "Two by two, and when one of you fears the coming of dawn, he prays one, which makes what he has prayed odd." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, did not specify a particular number to be limited to. But the important thing in Taraweeh prayer is humility and calmness in bowing, prostration, and rising from them, and that one does not do what some people do of rushing quickly, which prevents the worshippers from performing the recommended acts, and may even prevent them from performing the obligatory ones, due to his eagerness to be the first to leave the mosques so that people crowd around him, for this is contrary to what is prescribed.

The imam must fear Allah Almighty regarding those behind him, and not prolong in a way that is difficult for them and outside the Sunnah, nor shorten in a way that compromises what is obligatory or recommended for those behind him. For this reason, the scholars said it is disliked for the imam to rush in a way that prevents the follower from performing the recommended acts, so what about one who rushes in a way that prevents the followers from performing the obligatory acts? This kind of rushing is forbidden for this imam.

So we ask Allah for us and our brothers to remain steadfast and safe.

Q37: What is the ruling on combining all or some of Taraweeh prayer with Witr in one tasleem?

(1) Narrated by al-Bukhari 990 and Muslim 1695.

A37: This act invalidates the prayer, because the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “The

night prayer is two by two.” So if someone combines them in one tasleem, it is no longer two by two, and thus it goes against what the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, also said, “Whoever does an action that is not in accordance with our matter, it is rejected.” Imam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, stated, “Whoever stands for a third rak‘ah in the night prayer, it is as if he stood for a third in Fajr prayer.” Meaning, if he continues after remembering, then his prayer becomes invalid just as it would in Fajr prayer. Therefore, if someone stands for a third rak‘ah in Taraweeh prayer out of forgetfulness, then remembers, he must return, sit for tashahhud, and prostrate for forgetfulness after the tasleem. If he does not do so, his prayer is invalid.

There is also an issue here, which is that some people misunderstood the hadith of Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, when she was asked: How was the Prophet’s, peace and blessings be upon him, prayer in Ramadan? She said, “He did not exceed eleven rak‘ahs in Ramadan or outside of it. He would pray four, so do not ask about how good and long they were, then he would pray four, so do not ask about how good and long they were, then

he would pray three.” Some thought that the first four were with one tasleem, and the second four with one tasleem, and the final three with one tasleem.

But this hadith can be understood as stated, and can also mean that she intended he prayed four with two tasleems, then sat to rest and regain energy, then prayed another four likewise. This interpretation is more likely—that he prayed two by two, but after the first four he sat to rest and regain energy, and likewise after the second four, he prayed two by two, then sat.

(1) Narrated by Muslim 4514.

And this is supported by the saying of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: “The night prayer is two by two,” so this combines his action and his saying, peace and blessings be upon him. The possibility that they were four with one tasleem exists, but it is outweighed by what we mentioned, that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: “The night prayer is two by two.”

As for Witr, if one prays it as three, then it has two forms: the first form is to say tasleem after two rak'ahs, then perform the third alone, and the second form is to pray all three together with one tashahhud and one tasleem.

Q38: What do you say about those who claim that the du'a at the completion of the Qur'an is an invented innovation?

A38: I do not know of any sound basis for the du'a at the completion of the Qur'an in prayer that can be relied upon from the Sunnah of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, nor from the actions of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. The most that is reported is what Anas ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, used to do—when he wanted to finish the Qur'an, he would gather his family and make du'a, but he did not do this in his prayer.

And prayer, as is well known, should not include introducing a du'a in a place where the Sunnah has not established it, due to the saying of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: "Pray as you have seen me praying."

As for calling this du‘a at the completion of the Qur’an in prayer an innovation, I do not like applying that label to it, because the scholars, the scholars of the Sunnah, have differed on it. So it is not appropriate to be harsh in criticism regarding something some of Ahl al-Sunnah have said is

among the recommended acts, but it is better for a person to be keen on following the Sunnah.

(1) Previously cited.

(2) Narrated by al-Bukhari 6008, Book of Manners.

Then there is an issue here practiced by some brothers who are keen on applying the Sunnah, which is that they pray behind one of the imams who make supplication at the completion of the Quran, and when the final rak‘ah comes, they leave and separate from the people on the pretext that the completion is an innovation, and this is something that should not be done due to the resulting division of hearts and alienation, and because it is contrary to what the imams have stated. For Imam Ahmad, may Allah have mercy on him, did not consider the Qunoot in Fajr prayer recommended, yet he said, “If

a person follows an imam who performs Qunoot in Fajr prayer, let him follow him and say Ameen to his supplication.”

A similar Issue is that some brothers keen on following the Sunnah regarding the number of rak‘ahs in Taraweeh

prayer, if they pray behind an imam who prays more than eleven or thirteen rak‘ahs, they leave when the imam exceeds this number, and this too is something that should not be done, and it is contrary to the practice of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, for when ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, may Allah be pleased with him, completed the prayer in Mina based on his interpretation, they disagreed with him for completing the prayer, yet they still prayed behind him and completed the prayer. And it is known that completing the prayer in a situation where shortening is prescribed is a greater contradiction to the Sunnah than increasing the number of rak‘ahs beyond thirteen, yet the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not separate from ‘Uthman or refrain from praying with him. And they were without doubt more eager than us in following the Sunnah, more correct in opinion than us,

and firmer in adhering to what the Islamic Shari‘ah entails.

So we ask Allah to make us all among those who see the truth and follow it, and see falsehood as falsehood and avoid it.

Q39: Some Muslims are accustomed to identifying the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramadan as Laylat al-Qadr. Does

this specification have a basis, and is there any evidence for it?

A39: Yes, this specification has a basis, which is that the night of the twenty-seventh is the most likely to be Laylat al-Qadr, as reported in Sahih Muslim from the hadith of Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, may Allah be pleased with him. However, the strongest opinion among the scholars — whose views on this matter exceed forty — is that Laylat al-Qadr is in the last ten nights, especially the last seven. So it may be the twenty-seventh night, or the twenty-fifth, or the twenty-third, or the twenty-ninth, or

the twenty-eighth, or the twenty-sixth, or the twenty-fourth.

Therefore, a person should strive during all the nights so as not to miss out on its virtue and reward. Allah the Exalted said: {Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night. Indeed, We were to warn [mankind]} [Ad-Dukhan: 3] .. and He said: {Indeed, We sent it down on the Night of Decree, and what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn} [Surat al-Qadr].

Q40: If fasting is difficult for a breastfeeding woman, is it permissible for her to break the fast?

A40: Yes, it is permissible for her to break the fast if it is difficult for her, or if she fears for her child due to a decrease in breastfeeding, then in this case it is allowed for her to break her fast and make up the number of days she missed.

Q41: In some pharmacies, there is an inhaler used by asthma patients. Is it permissible for a fasting person to use it during the day in Ramadan?

A41: Using the inhaler is permissible for the fasting person, whether their fast is in Ramadan or otherwise, because this inhaler does not reach the stomach, but rather reaches the bronchial tubes, which open due to its properties, and the person is then able to breathe normally. It is not considered food or drink, nor does it reach the stomach.

And it is known that the basic principle is that the fast remains valid unless there is evidence from the Qur'an, Sunnah, consensus, or correct analogy indicating its invalidation.

Q42: What is the ruling on a fasting person using toothpaste during the day in Ramadan?

A42: Using toothpaste for the fasting person in Ramadan or at other times is not objectionable if it does not reach the stomach, but it is better not to use it, because it has a strong penetration and may reach the stomach without

the person feeling it. For this reason, the Prophet ﷺ said to Laqeet ibn Sabrah: “Exaggerate in rinsing the nose unless you are fasting.” So it is better for the fasting person not to use toothpaste, and the matter is broad, if he delays it until after breaking the fast, he will have avoided what might potentially invalidate the fast.

Q43: Is it true that rinsing the mouth in wudu is dropped for the fasting person during the day in Ramadan?

A43: This is not correct. Rinsing the mouth in wudu is one of the obligations of wudu, whether during the day in Ramadan or otherwise, for the fasting person and for others, based on the general statement of Allah: {Wash your faces} [Al-Ma'idah: 6]. However, it is not appropriate to exaggerate in rinsing the mouth or sniffing water up the nose while

fasting, due to the hadith of Laqeet ibn Sabrah in which the Prophet ﷺ said: “Complete the wudu, and clean between the fingers, and exaggerate in rinsing the nose unless you are fasting.”

Q44: Does a fasting person break their fast by taking an injection in the vein?

A44: A fasting person does not break their fast by taking an injection, whether in the vein or elsewhere, unless the injection serves the purpose of nourishment, such that the person can do without food and drink because of it. As for injections that do not serve this purpose, then they do not invalidate the fast at all, whether taken via the vein or otherwise, because these injections are neither food nor drink, nor similar to food and drink. Therefore, they do not fall under the same ruling as eating and drinking.

Q45: Does taking some blood for testing or donation during the day in Ramadan break the fast?

A45: If a person has a small amount of blood taken that does not weaken the body, then this does not invalidate the fast,

whether it is taken for testing, diagnosis, or for donation to someone in need.

However, if a large amount of blood is taken such that it weakens the body, then it does invalidate the fast, by analogy with cupping, which is established in the Sunnah as something that breaks the fast.

Accordingly, it is not permissible for a person to donate such a large amount of blood while fasting an obligatory fast like that of Ramadan, unless there is a necessity, in that case, he may donate it to address the necessity, but he will be considered as having broken his fast, and he should eat and drink the rest of the day and make up that day later.

Q46: What is the ruling on using the siwak (tooth-stick) after midday while fasting?

A46: Using the siwak while fasting, whether before or after midday, is Sunnah — just as it is for non-fasting individuals — because the hadiths regarding using the siwak are general and do not exclude fasting individuals before or after midday.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “The siwak is a purifier for the mouth and pleasing to the Lord...” and he also said: “Had

I not feared hardship on my ummah, I would have commanded them to use the siwak at every prayer.”

Q47: What is your advice, may Allah preserve you, to some mosque imams who leave their mosques during Ramadan and travel to Makkah for ‘umrah and to pray in the Haram during this month?

A47: Our advice to these imams is that they should know that staying in their mosques to gather the people and fulfill their duty, which they committed to before their government, is better than going to Makkah to reside there and pray. The Prophet ﷺ only mentioned ‘umrah in Ramadan, saying: “Umrah in Ramadan is equal to Hajj,” and he did not mention residing there. There is no doubt that residing in Makkah is better than residing elsewhere, but this applies to someone who does not have work connected to a duty before his government, which he must carry out. So my advice to these imams is that if they wish to perform ‘umrah, they should go and return without delay to fulfill what they owe to their brothers and those in authority.

Q48: Some people believe that ‘umrah in Ramadan is obligatory on every Muslim and must be performed at least once in a lifetime. Is this correct?

A48: This is not correct. ‘Umrah is obligatory once in a lifetime and is not obligatory more than that. Performing ‘umrah in Ramadan is recommended, as the Prophet ﷺ said: “Umrah in Ramadan is equal to Hajj.”

We ask Allah Almighty to grant us and our Muslim brothers success in what He loves and is pleased with. He is Generous and Noble. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and all his companions.